



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

June 4, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Designated NEFOP Observers
FROM: Amy S. Van Atten
Acting Branch Chief, FSB
SUBJECT: Chain-Mat Stretch Study

This memo is to inform you that you have been selected to participate in a data collection study requested by the Northeast Regional Office (NERO) Protected Resources Division (PRD) regarding chain stretch on chain-mat modified scallop dredges.

The Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) is asking that you collect this additional information for all observed scallop trips on vessels using a chain-mat modified dredge throughout the regulated season, which ends on November 30, 2008. This study will begin as soon as you receive this memo and attachment.

A chain-mat is composed of rock and tickler chains that are configured such that the openings formed by the intersecting chains have no more than 4 sides. The chains must be connected to each other with a shackle or link at each intersection point.

This study requires that three random openings on the chain-mat, as described above, are chosen at the beginning of the trip for one dredge. The same three openings should be measured at the end of the trip in order to determine if stretch is occurring. Any opening that is created by chains connected to the sweep chain should not be used (See Figure 1).





Figure 1. Illustration of acceptable random openings to measure and non-acceptable openings connected to the sweep.

The length of each side of these three openings will be measured at the beginning of the trip, the end of the trip, and at any other time during the trip if the opportunity arises, with safety remaining as the highest priority. It is important that the same three openings are measured each time.

The measurement for the length of each side of the opening must be taken along the chain, with the chain held taut, and include one shackle or link at the intersection point and all links in the chain up to, but excluding, the shackle or link at the other intersection point (See Figure 2).

Use your tape measure to obtain these measurements. The measurements must be to a tenth of an inch.

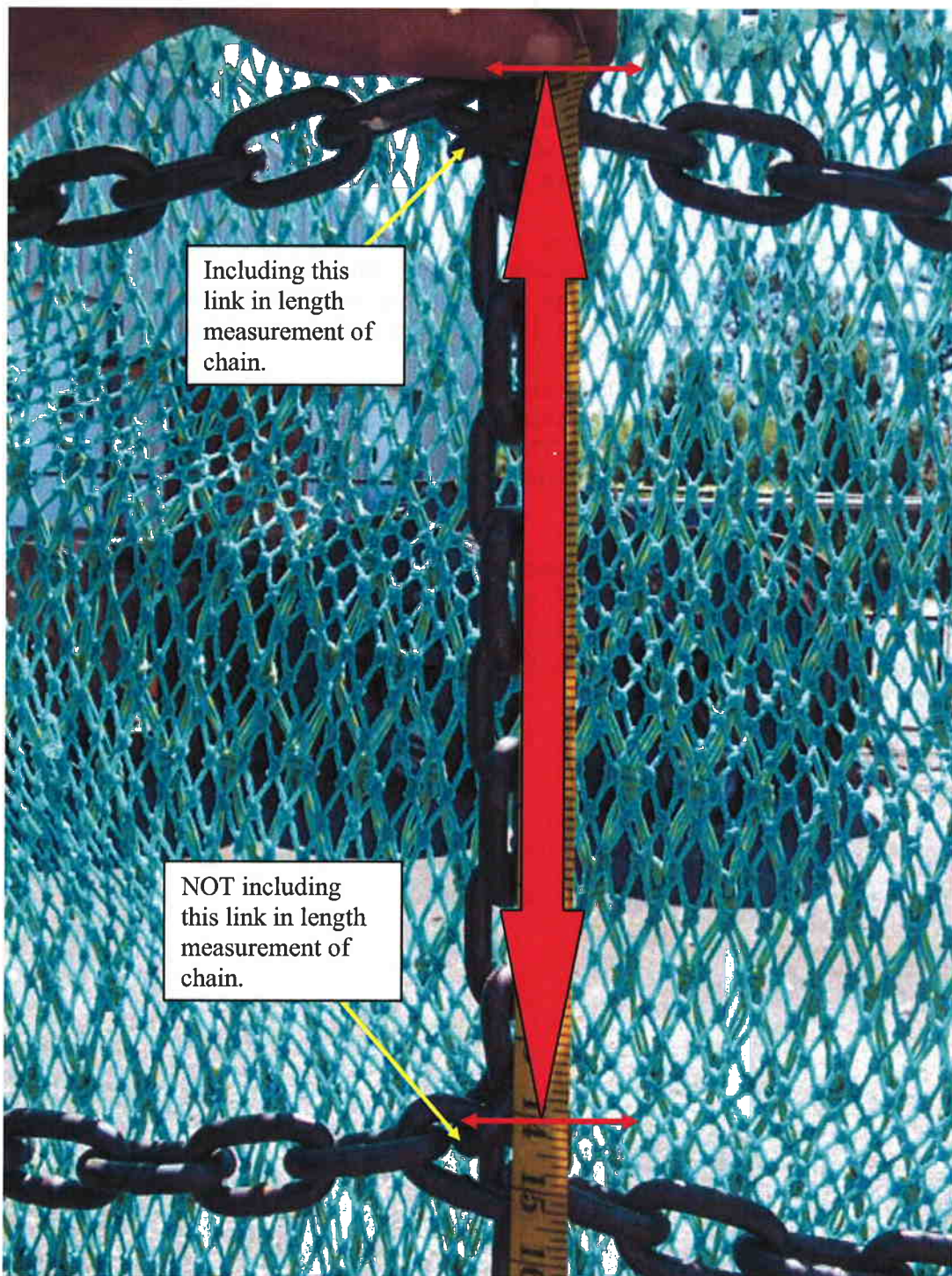


Figure 2. Illustration of measuring the length of one side of a random opening.

The attached worksheet must be completed and sent in with your trip logs. The NEFOP asks that you write "**Chain-Mat Stretch Study**" in the COMMENTS section of the dredge that you obtained the measurements from, on your Scallop Dredge Gear Characteristics Log, when the attached worksheet is completed to identify these study trips.

The NERO/PRD is also asking for comments on your SCALLOP DREDGE HAUL LOG if you notice broken shackles or links in the chain-mat as the dredge is coming on-board and to also comment if repair to these broken shackles or links occur.

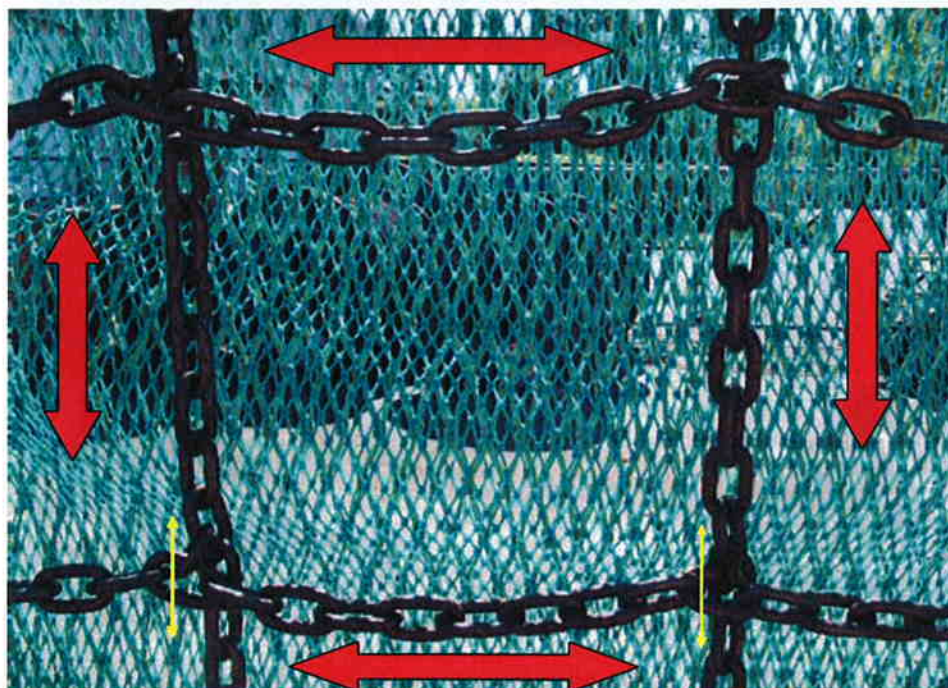
Please note that this information is in addition to the normal gear measurements and sampling protocols used to complete your trip logs. Thank you in advance for helping with this study and know that your extra time and hard work are greatly appreciated.

If you have additional questions, please contact either Sara Wetmore: (508) 495-2227 office, (508) 642-6005 mobile, Sara.Wetmore@noaa.gov or Erin Kupcha: (508) 495-2031 office, (508) 367-8256 mobile, Erin.Kupcha@noaa.gov.

Thank you.

Attachment:
Chain-mat Stretch Study Worksheet



Measurement 1**Measurement 4****Measurement 2****Measurement 3**

| OPENING 1 | Measurement 1 | Measurement 2 | Measurement 3 | Measurement 4 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Beginning of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| * | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| End of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |

| OPENING 2 | Measurement 1 | Measurement 2 | Measurement 3 | Measurement 4 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Beginning of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| * | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| End of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |

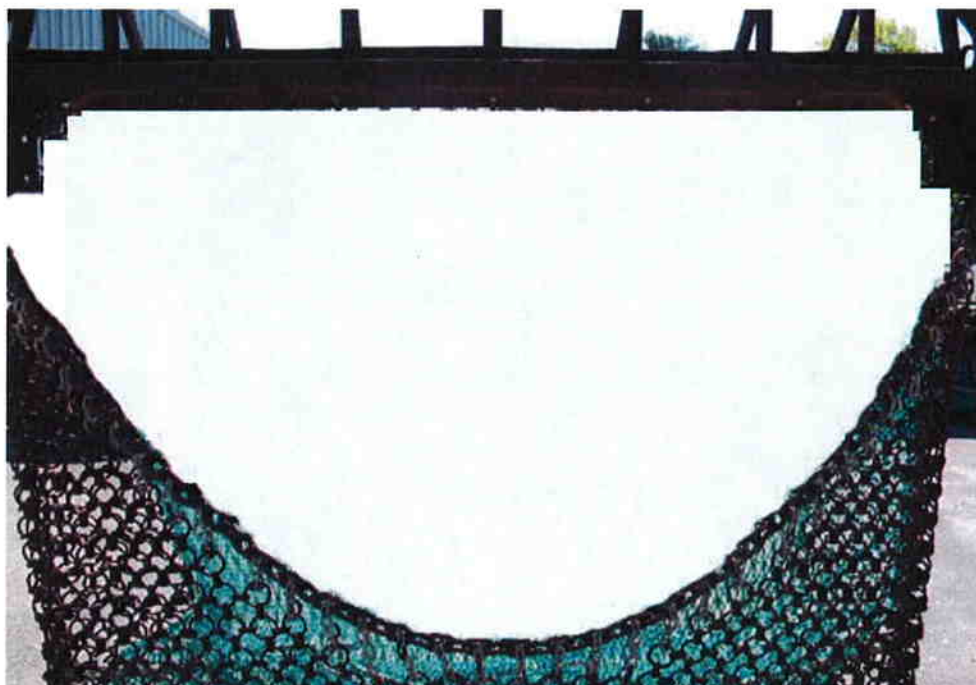
| OPENING 3 | Measurement 1 | Measurement 2 | Measurement 3 | Measurement 4 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Beginning of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| * | . in | . in | . in | . in |
| End of Trip | . in | . in | . in | . in |

* For other measurement opportunities, record the time the measurements were taken in relation to a haul
(example: "Before Haul 5", "Between Hauls 40 and 41", "After Haul 100")

NMFS FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM
CHAIN_MAT STRETCH STUDY WORKSHEET (Back)

OBS/TRIP ID

DATE LAND mm/yy



Use this drawing or draw your own picture underneath to document the number of rock and tickler chains used to create the chain mat and the THREE RANDOM OPENINGS you have chosen to measure and record information on the front of this worksheet.